

## Introducing ARMOR's New Editor-in-Chief

# Let Us Continue the Dialogue

*The author, Major Terry A. Blakely, joined the Armor Staff this month as the magazine's 38th Editor-in-Chief.*

Sitting here picking prairie grass out of my bootlaces and knocking the dust off my BDUs, I look around and see for the first time a new set of surroundings. A new building, new subordinates, new job, and a new parking place. Now I must get into a car — no HMMWV with this job — in order to see or hear the familiar high-pitched whine of turbine engines. It takes a few minutes now to find a good whiff of what I call the smell of freedom, JP-8 fuel burning into exhaust gases. The motor pool and the field are no longer a short walk away. Frankly, the changes are somewhat disconcerting. However, as I turn from a window view of a parking lot and family housing and gaze inward, the unsettled feeling begins to fade. All the trappings of the well-used military office are present, so it certainly isn't their presence that puts me at ease. It is the bottom shelf of the bookcase by the desk that gives the first clue that all will be well.

On the bottom shelf is a complete set of this magazine, and according to my predecessor, every issue from the March 1888 issue of the *Journal of the United States Cavalry Association*, highlighting a debate on whether the cavalry trooper should carry a saber or revolver as his primary armament, to the March/April 1995 *ARMOR* issue featuring specs on the latest Russian main battle tank. In between are years and years of accumulated knowledge about, well, everything our branch is: mud, cold biting winds, teamwork, maintenance, POL, new equipment, variations of tactics, techniques, and procedures, probably some more mud, hot canteens, cold coffee, thrown tracks, first round hits, successful breaches, numbing shock effects, NTC OPFOR, historical pieces, and book reports. And more. When I see that, reassurance sweeps over me.

This editor's desk will be a good fit — it is a well-worn prop — and certainly it has an air of permanence to it. It will last longer than me, just as it has survived longer than any of the other temporary editors. The whole office feels the same way. There isn't much in need of radical change around here. Sure, I'll put my set of 1980's-vintage Armor Association Karen Randall prints on the walls to mark my territory (I'm set #132), and I'll bring in some of

my most treasured martial texts to spruce up the tops of the bookcases, but the bottom line feeling I get is the same. I'm the current caretaker for a living, lasting piece of our profession's intellectual development. That is an exciting and humbling charge.

The last few years have amply demonstrated that there is only one fact that any of us can bet on. Whatever our plans, the future international events that will call us tankers and cavalymen to action defy accurate prediction. That is a fact of professional military life. If we know and accept that change is the only constant, we all should be able to keep focus, and not be consumed by downsizings, restationings, closures, and all of the other distracters pulling our attentions away from the essential point of our existence. That is, we are to train to fight and win any battle on our terms. We must always be the team that has the most high-velocity, direct-fire cannons ready to fire into the engagement area at the decisive point and at the critical time. That is a challenging order to comply with, and one of the reasons why your magazine exists.

I will dedicate my efforts and rededicate those of the very small, but highly competent *ARMOR* staff to maintaining this journal's focus on warfighting matters. We welcome suggestions and material from the field for it is our lifeblood.

The exchange of ideas is only as powerful as the power of those exchanging the ideas, so I ask each of you to convince others, be they fellow armored soldiers or interested academicians, to participate here in this dialogue of ideas. I believe there is something of interest for every armored soldier in this issue. If they have already chosen to subscribe, that is fine, but at a minimum, the force needs you to get those people to read a unit copy and pass it on — or recycle your own. We will stay ahead of the vagaries of change if all of us cross the line of departure together with extensive crew drills behind us and ready for whatever the battlefield throws at us.

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By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

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